

research snapshot

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Creating Local and Global Change: The Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights Project

What is this research about?

The Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights project is a community-academic research partnership with stakeholders in Canada and the Global South. Its partners work at local, national and international levels to look at:

- The lived experiences of LGBT people in selected Commonwealth countries, and for those seeking asylum in Canada.
- The impact of discrimination on their lives.
- The work of human rights leaders and community groups dealing with LGBT (including refugees) rights, supports, and services.
- The interaction between international human rights mechanisms and LGBT human rights initiatives.

However, there are challenges with working with LGBT partners in the Global South, including isolation, lack of resources, as well as threats of violence and persecution due to criminalization and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Envisioning seeks to address these inequities by providing resources and building capacity in research and documentation.

What did the researchers do?

The Principal Investigator (PI) travelled to various countries to build partnerships with local groups and leaders for LGBT rights in Africa, the Caribbean and

What you need to know:

Community-university research partnerships can enhance both the local and global capacities. All partners who participate have an active role in creating and applying new knowledge that is meaningful and creates real change.

India and reached out to a network of community-based groups and social services agencies representing diverse communities in the Greater Toronto region. The project brought together 31 partners from 11 countries together, and developed the project research goals through a collaborative process.

An Executive Committee and five research teams (Africa, Caribbean, India, Canada, and Law and Human Rights Mechanisms) were formed as a governance structure for the project. Community partners are provided with funding to support their participation in the project and a Community Chair on each research team.

The Envisioning project uses a multi-methods approach, framing the research activities through Participatory Action Research. They use a wide range of tools including: qualitative interviews, focus groups, legal research, and documentary and participatory video.

What did the researchers find?

Participatory video with global south partners

Envisioning worked with community partners to build capacity in documenting human rights violations and to document the work of human rights defenders and LGBT organization, providing workshops in qualitative research, and equipment and training participatory video. So far, research and videographer units have been set up with seven community partners based in Africa and the Caribbean. Their work has resulted in a documentary called *The Time Has Come*, which premiered at the UN in Geneva in June 2013; and a series of video shorts on the lives and experiences of LGBT people in St Lucia, Guyana, Botswana, Kenya and Uganda. Envisioning has also brought international participants in the project together in regional conferences in the Caribbean and Africa, to create international dialogue on LGBT human rights.

Canada research team

The researchers are documenting and researching barriers for LGBT refugees. As an initial step they held a roundtable with LGBT service providers, and refugee support groups to engage others with the Envisioning project and to consult on needs and goals to inform the research project. Follow up interviews and focus groups are underway currently, to learn more about LGBT refugee experiences. The health impact of settlement barriers for LGBT refugees is also being explored.

How can you use this research?

Scholars doing research that has impact for both local and global communities may find this research useful. It offers important insights on the barriers and potential change that can come with community-university research that is global and that builds long term and ongoing networks.

About the Researchers

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Citation

Nicol, N., Mulé, N., and Gates-Gasse, E. (2013). *Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights: Strategic Alliances to Advance Knowledge and Social Change*.

Keywords

LGBT peoples, Human rights, Community-University research partnerships, Knowledge exchange, Knowledge mobilization

Knowledge Mobilization at York

York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit provides services for faculty, graduate students, community and government seeking to maximize the impact of academic research and expertise on public policy, social programming, and professional practice. This summary has been supported by the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation at York and project funding from SSHRC and CIHR.

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